DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 212 032 EA 013 745

AUTHOR LaMarche, Alfred J.
TITLE Selecting and Evaluating Staff in Small School Districts.
PUB DATE 12 Feb 81
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of School Administrators (113th, Atlanta, GA, February 13-16, 1981). Appendix A may not reproduce due to poor quality of original document.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role; *Administrator Selection; Board of Education Role; Community Involvement; Elementary Secondary Education; *Negotiation Agreements; Superintendents; Teacher Participation; Teacher Salaries; *Teacher Selection
IDENTIFIERS *Jamestown Public Schools RI; Rehiring; *Small School Districts

ABSTRACT

Staff selection and hiring in the Jamestown (Rhode Island) Public Schools includes two unusual elements: Teachers, administrators, and the community are involved in the hiring procedure and the superintendent negotiates with teachers hired to determine their first year salaries. During the district's recent selection of an elementary school principal, teachers participated on the committee screening candidates. Community members also recently helped constitute the committee examining superintendent candidates. In both cases the school board made the final choice. In teacher selection as well, teachers play a large role, along with the principal, in screening and interviewing candidates and selecting finalists. The superintendent interviews the teacher finalists and recommends the top choice to the board. If the board approves, the superintendent negotiates the beginning salary level with the teacher. The teachers' union contract allows the board to negotiate initial placement on the salary schedule for teachers in their first year of employment with the district. This unusual provision allows the district to hire more experienced teachers. In return for this concession, the contract grants teachers who have been laid off the right to be rehired, in order of seniority, as positions for which they are qualified become available. (RW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED212032

TO: AASA Press Office
Room 215
Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, Georgia

FROM: Dr. Alfred J. LaMarche, Superintendent of Schools

RE: Selecting and Evaluating Staff in Small School Districts
Saturday, February 14, 1981, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

DATE: Notes for speech to be given on February 14th
February 12, 1981

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Alfred J. LaMarche
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

When School Board members in Jamestown, Rhode Island, refer to "that long, hot summer" they aren't talking about race riots in Detroit or Watts. Instead, they're thinking of the heat and pressure they felt in the summer of 1979, in their search for a new Elementary School Principal and a new Superintendent of Schools for their 700 student school district. In this Narragansett Bay island town, tied to the mainland by the Jamestown Bridge, on one side, and to the larger Aquidneck Island by the Newport Bridge, on the other side, hiring two administrators is not taken as lightly as raking for quahogs. Actually, it's more like responding to the call to cross the English Channel and save Dunkirk! So, the Board formed two task forces to help wage their campaign.

Selecting Administrators

The first consisted of teachers and Board members who were charged with the responsibility to screen and interview candidates for the principalship. The Board deliberately chose a teacher to serve as Chairman - a fact not revealed during the interviews to the candidates. Teachers, not Board members, were the high participators, leaving Board members free to observe and listen. In this way the

EA 013 745

Board learned

- which qualities the staff were looking for in their new principal,
- which problems were at Jamestown Elementary School (k-8), and
- which candidate seemed most likely to succeed without becoming a captive of the faculty in the process.

A different committee structure was used for the superintendency. This consisted of five community-spirited citizens with different, yet complimentary, backgrounds. The Chairman was a parent, a college administrator, and a former School Board Chairman. One member, whose wife was a member of the local teaching staff, was a certified public accountant. Another, was an athlete, wife of a prominent clergyman, parent, and former teacher. One was a social studies teacher from the off-island high school that Jamestown's secondary school students attend, and the fifth member was the Assistant Principal in charge of discipline at that same high school. Their charge: to determine how well each candidate might meet the Superintendent's leadership and administrative responsibilities to the Board, staff, students, and community.

The School Board then interviewed the finalists for each position and made their selections.

It should be noted that the committee to screen candidates for elementary-school principalship was heavily school oriented and relied heavily on faculty participation

in all phases of the selection process.

The committee to screen candidates for the superintency was largely Board and community oriented and was structured accordingly.

Selecting Teachers

As in the case of selecting a new Principal, teachers play a major role in the process of screening and recommending new teachers.

The process is as follows:

1. The Principal and 3 - 6 teachers establish the instructional requirements and criteria for each teaching vacancy.
2. The Principal and teachers screen applications and credentials.
3. The Principal and teachers develop an interview schedule.
4. Applicants selected for interviews undergo three interviews as Phase I of the selection process, as follows:
    a. With a sub-committee of teachers from lower grades.
    b. With a sub-committee of teachers from upper grades.
    c. An interview with the principal.
5. Each applicant is rated after each of the three interviews and rated on a scale of 1.0 to 4.0.

6. The Principal then meets with both sub-committees to compare ratings and to select the top two/three applicants. The results are reported to the Superintendent.

7. The Superintendent interviews finalists.

8. The Superintendent then meets with the Board, executive session, and recommends his top choice for the vacancy. If Board agrees, the Superintendent is authorized to negotiate the starting salary with the teacher he has recommended. If Superintendent's negotiations with the teacher are successful (less than, or not exceeding, the limit set by the Board), the agreement is put in writing. (See Appendix A) If there is an impasse, however, the Superintendent tells the teacher that an impasse exists and proceeds to negotiate with his second choice. (As with the top candidate, the Superintendent must stay at or below the salary limit set by the Board.)

9. At the next regular open meeting of the Board, the Superintendent requests the Board to appoint the teacher to the vacancy.

The practice of negotiating the initial salary of a new teacher is somewhat new, perhaps unique, to Jamestown, R.I. The history of its origins may be of interest.

Negotiating Initial Salary of New Teacher

Last year, the School Board negotiated a new three-year contract with the Jamestown Teachers Association. In exchange for certain provisions sought by the JTA, the Board obtained the following contractual agreement:

> "The Jamestown School Committee reserves the right to negotiate salary step placement of certified personnel in their first year of employment within the Jamestown School System."

Since then, the Board has appointed six new teachers. The attached table (see Appendix B) shows the comparative starting salaries of these new teachers. The reader may note certain advantages for teachers and the Board that result from negotiating initial salaries:

1. The Board is better able to provide the school system with a balance of experienced and inexperienced teachers.
2. Teacher applicants with experience are not automatically "priced out of the market", because of tight budgets. Experienced, highly-qualified teachers seeking a change to the Jamestown area of Rhode Island are easier to recruit.
3. Experienced teachers are free to negotiate for as much salary as they feel their qualifications justify, taking into consideration the relative scarceness of teachers in

their respective teaching specialties. The same advantage holds for the Board.

It should be made clear that the teachers recommended by the Superintendent to the Board for appointment were the same candidates recommended to the Superintendent by the teacher/Principal sub-committees. The significance of this is that candidates with experience were not automatically favored over inexperienced teachers, and visa-versa. This speaks well for the professionalism of the staff. At the same time it confirms the conventional wisdom that teaching experience, as a factor in selection, should be evaluated in terms of its relative importance to the particular teaching vacancy, and rewarded, accordingly. In school districts where full credit must be given for previous experience, irrespective of its relevance to the needs of the hiring school district, experienced teachers are not likely to be hired; and when they are hired, the Board is likely to be overcharged.

It must be emphasized that individual salary negotiations with teachers is strictly a one-time affair, namely, at the

entry level of employment. From then on, the Board is obligated by State law to compensate teachers in accordance with the official teacher salary schedule for the district.

One interesting possibility. Although, this hasn't happened yet, it's possible at some future time that a teacher, while negotiating his/her initial salary, will try to be placed at a higher level on the teacher salary schedule than his/her years of experience would warrant. Theoretically, this can happen in Jamestown. When it does, maybe -- just maybe -- the Board will concede!

What concessions did the Board make to the Jamestown Teachers Association in order to gain the right to negotiate initial salaries of new teachers?

Right of Recall

The Jamestown Teachers Association won several concessions from the Jamestown Board in exchange for the Board's right to negotiate initial salaries of new teachers. One that is especially pertinent to the topic of this meeting is the Right of Recall. This provision provides those

teachers who have served one full year or more in the Jamestown School System whose contracts were not renewed for other than job-related performace with the right to be rehired by the Board in the order of their seniority as positions for which they have certification become available. This provision is valid for a teacher for a period of 30 months from March 1st of the year in which the non-renewal of contract became effective.

This provision has obvious advantages for teachers. But it places added responsibilities. The administration must evaluate a new teacher's performance during the first few months of employment to determine whether the teacher will have the right to a teaching position over any future prospective applicant and over those with less seniority who are also on the Right of Recall list.

Closing Remarks

Staff selection in Jamestown involves teachers in the selection of certified and non-certified personnel, including a new Principal.

The selection of a new Superintendent involves community-

spirited citizens with backgrounds that are relevant to the position to be filled.

Involvement of both teachers and citizens has increased the reliability of staff selections without the Board, or Superintendent, forfeiting any of their prerogatives. The Board's right to negotiate initial teacher salaries has its own unique advantages. And, the Right of Recall provision of the group contract gives teachers an added measure of job security and challenges the school administration to do a more thorough job of evaluating teacher performance.

A program of evaluation of teachers and administrators is currently under study.

APPENDIX A

(Best poss. copy)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

02835

TO: Jamestown School Committee

FROM: Jane Smith, Alfred LaMarche

DATE: August 14, 1980

Having met on August 14, 1980 to negotiate initial salary in the event the Jamestown School Committee appoints her to a teaching position for the 1980-81 school year, the aforementioned parties reached a mutual agreement as follows:

Step 2 at the B.A. +36 level of training for a starting salary of $13,003.

SIGNED: Jane Smith DATE:
Teacher Candidate

SIGNED: Alfred LaMarche DATE:
Superintendent of Schools

APPENDIX B

TEACHERS WHO NEGOTIATED INITIAL SALARY
Jamestown, R.I.

Teachers*	Years of Experience	Negotiated Initial Salary Step	Were other qualified candidates available?
A	7	6	Yes - with as much, or more, experience and numerous beginners.
B	3	2	Yes - Same as A
C	1 (part-time)	0	Yes - Same as A
D	0	0	Yes - Same as A
E	1 (part-time)	0	Yes - An experienced teacher had been appointed but had to withdraw application for personal reasons.
F	1 (part-time)	0	Yes - Same as A

*Evaluated by Teacher Selection Committee (consisting of 3-6 local teachers and Principal) as the top candidate, or one of the top two-three, for the job.